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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7116  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 3953  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 1769  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 7603  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1391  
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0836  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 1862  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 4001  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 HONG KONG 000461

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/OCS/EAP,  
STATE FOR M/PRI FOR ROBIN MORRITZ  
STATE FOR SES-O FOR ELIAS PARRA  
STATE FOR AAIT  
STATE FOR OES/IHA  
STATE FOR MED  
HHS FOR OGHA - STEIGER, HICKEY  
CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLU](#) [KSEO](#) [KPAO](#) [TBIO](#) [HK](#) [CH](#)  
SUBJECT: HONG KONG'S UPDATED AVIAN INFLUENZA/PANDEMIC  
TRIPWIRES

REF: A. STATE 6306  
[1](#)B. STATE 13929

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Post submits the following updated Pandemic Influenza (PI) tripwires for consideration and coordination in response to Department-provided guidance and action request (Reftel A). These tripwires were developed as part of Post's ongoing efforts to ensure we are as prepared as possible for a pandemic event and have taken into account the latest available information and HKG's capabilities and likely responses. Per department instruction, Post is now working to update these tripwires in the Crisis and Emergency Planning Application (CEPA)(Reftel B). END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Post continues to view tripwires as prompts to consider options and not absolute triggers. The Department PI tripwires have been carefully reviewed and are incorporated into Post's pandemic response planning. Post assumes that if Avian Influenza (AI) becomes efficiently able to transmit human-to-human, infections would spread quickly throughout the region and that Hong Kong, because of its location along China's south coast, dense population, and role as a regional transportation hub, could expect infections and exposures within a short period. Post's variations from Department tripwires reflect HKG capabilities and expected actions as well as provide fidelity on a range of anticipated local indicators and possible options.

Hong Kong is Well Prepared  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Hong Kong is perhaps the best prepared city in Asia and among the best prepared in the world to respond to a PI outbreak. Building on lessons learned from previous outbreaks of AI and as the epicenter of the SARS outbreak in 2002, Hong Kong has committed tremendous resources to building this PI response capability. Hong Kong's first line of defense is a capable AI surveillance program headed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Poultry

farms and food markets are heavily monitored and both wild and domestic birds are tested regularly for AI. If the AI virus is found, strict quarantines and protocols are initiated with the full cooperation of Hong Kong's citizenry.

¶4. (SBU) Hong Kong's second line of defense, the Center for Health Protection (CHP) and Hospital Authority, are likewise highly professional and has adequate resources to deal with a PI outbreak. The health care system has in place detailed contingency plans, large stocks of anti-viral medications and experienced staff who are well trained and equipped. Hong Kong authorities fully cooperate with the World Health Organization (WHO) and are well networked with U.S. medical authorities. Hong Kong authorities and medical staff are also well linked regionally and cooperate with and support both Macau and mainland China authorities in routine AI surveillance and planning for a PI emergency. Private Americans can receive prescription medications via mail and local hospitals will provide emergency services to all foreigners and then seek reimbursement.

Tripwire One  
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¶5. (SBU) Multiple AI human infection in more than one country in the region; Or, Hong Kong's 3-tier response system goes from lowest response of Alert 8 to Level 2, "Serious"; Or, a significant AI outbreak in Hong Kong poultry populations or a confirmed AI human case in Hong Kong with potential widespread human health impact (no human-to-human

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transmission).

a. (U) Conduct outreach efforts with local health authorities and reconfirm all established lines of communications.

b. (U) Review medical supply levels and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) inventories; top off as needed.

c. (U) Review/update warden system and F-77 report.

d. (U) Closely monitor WHO, CDC, and other AI reporting and HKG announcements for updates and recommendations; disseminate relevant information and instructions to Consulate staff through internal e-mails and published announcements and to private AMCITs through newsletters and web-based announcements; advise AMCITs where to obtain up-to-date information about the situation and about Consulate operations.

e. (U) Remind and encourage Consulate staff and AMCIT community to maintain first aid kits that include hygiene items, basic medical supplies and medications; reference USG recommendations to maintain sufficient emergency supplies, including food and some water, to last up to twelve weeks.

Tripwire Two  
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¶6. (SBU) Dramatic increases in the number of human AI cases in the region; Or, reports of multiple AI infections in Hong Kong; Or, authoritative reports or indications of AI-triggered human quarantines, restrictions on travel, reports of imminent closures of regional borders or curtailment of civil aviation; Or, regional AI-triggered unrest/panic; Or, WHO raises Pandemic Alert Phase to level 4 (small clusters with limited human-to-human spread) and U.S. Federal Government Response is raised to Response Stage 2.

a. (U) Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meets to review situation. EAC, in consultation with the Operations Center's Crisis Management Staff (S/ES-O/CMS) and, if applicable, the State Department Task Force, confirm that Tripwire 2 has been crossed.

- b. (U) Review with Consulate staff Post's protective, treatment and preventative protocols, to include social isolation procedures.
- c. (U) Review with staff designated to assist the Medical Unit the bio-protection protocols, duties and procedures necessary to assist in the triage and care for Consulate staff or others showing AI-like symptoms.
- d. (U) Re-train employees in the use of PPE and N95 masks; consider issuing PPE, masks, sanitizers and other supplies to employees for both office and at-home use.
- e. (U) Verify all emergency phone trees and personnel rosters (to include the WebPASS Post Personnel System) are updated and test emergency communications and notification equipment and procedures.
- f. (U) Consider convening a Town Hall and OSAC (perhaps virtually by internet video conference) to disseminate information and respond to concerns regarding pandemic response preparations; if conducted, ensure any information provided is also sent to the AMCIT community. Information should emphasize that if a pandemic is declared, private Americans should consider departing at the earliest stage, while commercial options remain.

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- g. (U) Consider the initiation of protective/preventative protocols, including an intensified disinfection regime.
- h. (U) Consider restricting regional TDY or authorized regional leave travel to affected areas.
- i. (U) Consider additional liberal leave, flex-time and telecommuting policies to reduce consulate staffing; consider actions, such as reduced appointment times and walk-in services, to reduce crowding and congestion in public access areas of the Mission.

#### Tripwire Three

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17. (SBU) Confirmed multiple large clusters of efficient AI human-to-human transmission in the region or a confirmed cluster of AI human-to-human transmissions in Hong Kong; Or, WHO declares Pandemic Alert Period 5 (larger clusters but human-to-human spread still localized).

- a. (U) EAC subsumes AIWG. EAC, in consultation with the Operations Center's Crisis Management Staff (S/ES-O/CMS) and, if applicable, the State Department's Task Force, confirm that Tripwire 3 has been crossed.
- b. (U) Issue or re-supply staff with PPE, sanitizers and other supplies for both workspace and home use; initiate protective/preventative protocols and intensified disinfection regime.
- c. (U) Consider canceling non-essential regional TDY or leave travel and official visitor/delegation travel.
- d. (U) Issue an OCS-cleared warden message with the latest available AI guidance from HKG health authorities, U.S. Department of State, CDC and WHO.
- e. (U) Consider requesting authorized departures to the U.S. of EFM and non-essential personnel. If granted, Department will issue Travel Warning, and Post will disseminate it to the AMCIT community. Inform host government and other foreign missions of drawn status.
- f. (U) If authorized departure is requested but not granted, provide mission briefing for employees and dependents

emphasizing procedures in the event the Under Secretary for Management encourages employees to exercise liberal departure options (SMA, R&R, etc.)

g. (U) Consider advising employees to withdraw children from local schools and inform the AMCIT community of any decision to do so.

h. (U) Consider reducing Consulate operating hours and services and in consultation with CA, consider reducing visa services and reducing ACS services to emergency services only.

#### Tripwire Four

18. (SBU) Sustained/documented AI human-to-human transmission, evidenced by a cluster of cases in Hong Kong or clusters of infection in more than two countries in the region; Or, clear evidence of AI human-to-human transmission spread in Hong Kong's general population, evidenced by secondary cases resulting from contact with an index case. Or, Hong Kong's 3-tier response system goes from Level 2, &Serious8, to Level 3, &Emergency8; Or, WHO declares a Pandemic Period

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Phase 6 (increased and sustained transmission in the general population), U.S. Federal Government declares Response Stage 3 (widespread human outbreaks in multiple locations overseas); pandemic situation is such that it is difficult to get seats on the commercial flights still operating.

a. (U) EAC, in consultation with the Operations Center's Crisis Management Staff and the State Department Task Force, confirm that Tripwire 4 has been crossed.

b. (U) Office and LES Consular staffing augmented to respond to needs of AMCIT community, but otherwise reduce staffing to essential operations and personnel only. Non-essential staff placed on administrative leave.

c. (U) Consider establishing a 24-hour working group to assist staff and respond to inquiries regarding treatment centers and welfare and whereabouts concerns.

d. (U) Ensure that controlled/classified documents have been reduced to a less than one-hour destruct time.

e. (U) Send reminders to employees about health precautions, as well as procedures to report an emergency; ensure the same information is provided to AMCIT community. Americans should also be provided with information about HKG-established alternate care sites and given advice on how to obtain food and medications.

f. (U) Review host government's emergency mortuary set-up and ensure that Post will be able to assist Americans coordinate with medical authorities when a body must be placed in a mortuary facility.

g. (U) Request an update to the Travel Alert or Travel Warning to reflect current circumstances and Post actions; if the Department issues a revised Travel Alert or Travel Warning, Post should promptly disseminate it to the local AMCIT community.

#### Tripwire Five

19. (SBU) The pandemic situation is such that random acts of violence or an increase in threats are occurring; Or, the pandemic situation is such that the HKG cannot contain civil unrest.

a. (U) At the Front Office level, call the State Department Operations Center to report on the developing situation. EAC, in consultation with the Operations Center Crisis

management staff and the State Department Task Force, confirm that Department Tripwire 5 has been crossed.

b. (U) If not already done, set up and staff a 24-hour control room with stable electrical supply as well as telephone and internet access.

c. (U) Consider requesting Ordered Departure; if requested, provide information about potential numbers of private Americans departing and transportation availability.

d. (U) Consider actions that must be accomplished in the event all employees depart Post and operations are suspended; be ready to initiate document destruction.

e. (U) Update AMCIT community with the latest guidance concerning safety, travel and housing; if ordered departure is granted, disseminate the Department Travel Warning and strongly urge private Americans to consider relocating to the

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U.S. Warden message should note that Consulate services may soon become unavailable to those who stay.

f. (U) Arrange administrative control of residences and personal property of departing U.S. Government personnel. At the discretion of the Chief of Mission, in coordination with the Department, assistance may be extended to foreign nationals when humanitarian or U.S. national security interests dictate. Post must obtain prior approval from the Department before offering departure assistance.  
DONOVAN